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MISC.

Cooley

The Bible and Education.

The past season will long be remembered for its many and great conventions.

In our great cities at stated times have gathered men and women from all parts of the country, representing those organizations in which they are the most deeply interested. All classes and interests—political, fraternal, the G. A. R., educational and religious—have been represented.

While we are not met here for a political purpose, we represent that which is of vast importance, not alone to this government but to all nations and people on the earth, and the platform upon which we base our hopes was written by a wiser Hand and will have more to do with the welfare of this nation than any platform drafted by any political party in this presidential year.

We are a fraternal people, though not a secret society. There is no respect of persons—"Whosoever will may come"—and all may know the password, which is, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," and we endeavor to have

"The Christian's love for human kind,
To caste and climate unconfined."

We are not a convention of the Grand Army of the Republic, but of the Grand Army of Christ. Some are but new recruits, and some are veterans, bearing the scars of many years of service; but we are all under one great Leader who has never known defeat, and our banner, which floats even above the stars and stripes, has inscribed upon it, "Holiness to the Lord."

This is an Educational Convention, for we stand for that education which crowns all others and without which France became the France of the bloody Commune, and we are met here to devise the best methods of carrying out the last expressed wish of our great Teacher, which was, "Go ye into all the

world and preach the gospel to every creature," and it is of one of the methods by which we preach the gospel that I am to speak to-day.

We are standing upon the threshold of a new century. The hands of the clock have nearly run their second circuit and we will soon hear the twelve strokes for midnight of this nineteenth century and the twentieth century will be ushered in. The question of what that century is to bring is a most serious one to all thinking people, and the Christian men and women of this nation have much, very much to do in settling that question. We have within the space of a few months, sprung from a nation of comparative seclusion to one of great power whose influence will be felt over all the known world. We are to have a hand in the future progress of the world. What is to be the nature of that influence?

Is it to be war, blood-shed, and enmity between brethren and nations, or is the "sword to be made into pruning hooks," and the Prince of Peace to reign over a people whose motto is "Peace on earth, good will to men?" Only a strong missionary spirit can meet the perils which the new conditions will surely bring to us.

Some are with us who heard the strokes which announced the high noon of the century and have watched the wonderful progress which has been made during the past fifty years. All of us know something of what that progress has been, and it seems fitting that as we stand on the threshold of the new century and look back over the past and think of the rich heritage that has been bequeathed to us by the forefathers and pioneers in this great religious advancement, we should also take an inventory of what we have, and so far as possible look into the future and plan our work so that the young who are now in our schools and colleges, and who will, in the near future, be the guardians of church and state, shall feel that we, too, have left a heritage which is far above any wealth which this world can give.

Our opportunity is great to live and do nobly for the good of others. Is not our danger equally as great that we shall not realize our great opportunity and thus lose our chance?

I think that we are all coming to believe that when, in 1892, our beloved President, Mrs. Burgess, announced that "The way is open, if we have the courage to undertake it, for the

establishment of an English Bible Chair at the seat of the University of Michigan," she was carrying out a divine purpose and beginning a work which the Christian Woman's Board of Missions has been especially raised up to do.

I am sure all admit that the greatest missionary work is that which prepares the young of this great republic to go out as Christian men and women, fully armed to meet the temptations which come to all, and ready, not only to live Christianity, but also to carry it to those who have it not.

As in olden times no warrior went out to battle without his full armor on, so our young people, as they go out from the schools to fight the battle of life, should have the entire armor, not omitting the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God.

As in the life of men, so there seems to be in missions a tide, which, taken at its flood, leads on to victory, and I believe that we have reached that point in this Bible work, and if we allow it to pass it many never return to us as a people.

Our schools and colleges must help the church to save the world. Whittier saw the necessity of it when he wrote:

"Nor heeds the skeptic's puny hands,
While near the school the church-spire stands;
Nor fears the blinded bigot's rule,
While near her church-spire stands the school."

God is calling us to be and do more for Him, and He bids us to enlarge our work. As we do more for him, we expect greater things from Him. He has permitted us to see that it is His expectation for us that we shall put forth a strong effort that all men shall hear the Gospel, and that soon.

The fact that many of our Universities are ready to open their doors to Biblical instruction is evidence that those who are in the best position to see the need of it are clearly seeing that need.

May we rise to the opportunity which God has so clearly laid upon us.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." These words uttered by the wise man of old, and the fact that Christ is the great Teacher, and the Bible the greatest of textbooks and contains alone what might constitute an education, is beginning to be realized by those most interested in the education and welfare of our young people.

Surely, among our most noted presidents and professors of

our leading colleges, if not among our students, the Word of God is demanding recognition.

President Thwing, of Western Reserve University, has an article in the May *Century* on "Significant Ignorance About the Bible, as Shown Among College Students of Both Sexes," in which he gives an account of an examination which he made, on two occasions since 1894, of nearly one hundred college students, in order to learn what might be their knowledge about the Bible.

The first class examined consisted of thirty-four young men, freshmen, all except one, born either in northern Ohio, central New York or western Pennsylvania, and nearly all were associated with churches which are supposed to represent an intelligent knowledge of the Bible. To each of these thirty-four men twenty-two questions relating to the Bible were put, which would demand 748 answers. The record shows that 328 were answered. The identical questions, with a single exception, were later given to fifty-one members of the freshman class of a college for women, and out of a possible 1,122 correct answers only 552, or less than one-half the possible number, were received. The questions consisted of 22 extracts from Tennyson, each of which contained a Biblical allusion, so simple that any ordinary Sunday-school scholar should have been able to answer them. Many of the answers showed such utter ignorance of Bible facts that they bordered on the ridiculous. The students came from homes which are higher than the average on the social plane, with parents who stand high in professional, business and social life.

In commenting upon these statements which he makes President Thwing says:

"Now, the simple inference to be derived from these statements is that the knowledge of the Bible as literature is exceedingly meager among people whose knowledge is supposed to be most ample.

"To the Christian this fact is significant, for the Bible is the corner-stone of the Christian system. To the moralist, this presentation is significant, as evidence that the most important treatise on ethics is not adequately known. To the scholar it is also significant as standing for the failure of the better class of people of scholarly environments to know the most important piece of literature. * * * The Bible societies may print

the book by hundreds of thousands, but the people do not read it, or if they do read it they are not impressed by it. Its history, whether received as veracious or fabulous, is not known. * * * The majesty and magnificance of its style, its deftness of phrase and sweetness of allusion, its perfection of literary form, as well as the profound significance of its ethical and religious teachings are ceasing to be a part of the priceless possession of the community. Explain the condition as best we may, point out the results as one ought, yet the first emotion is one of grief over the impoverishment of humanity."

President Thwing attributes this condition to four causes. 1st. That the world is full of books, magazines and newspapers. 2d. That the Bible is not taught in the home as formerly. 3d. The inadequate teaching of the Sunday-school. 4th. The elimination of the Bible from the public schools.

Surely this is a most startling state of affairs in this land of christian homes of culture and refinement in christian(?) America, coming as it does from the President of one of the leading colleges of the country, situated in the very heart of the Western Reserve, which is noted for its culture and refinement, and where people pride themselves upon being descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers, who have been called the people of one book, and that book the Bible.

Surely, after such a statement, all christian people can see that the Bible Work was commenced none too soon.

Light radiates from a center. The Word of the Lord was to go out from the central place of the then known world, "For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Our schools and colleges are centers of influence. Our college graduates become the leaders in professional and social life in our cities, which are the great centers of influence, and the college education which does not train the heart as well as the mind, and does not mold right character, is a defective education, and in some cases will do more harm than good. Intellectual progress sometimes brings emancipation from pagan superstition, but it is often followed by skepticism and atheism. Who can not call to mind an educated Atheist, and has not been pained to see the great evil that such a person, because of his social position, can accomplish?

It has been said that at no place is a young man so subject to religious influence as at college, and it is equally true that at no place is he so subject to temptations of a certain nature. The mind is in a formative state and the good or evil stamped upon it at that time is as lasting as life itself. David James Burrell says: "It is 33 years since my graduation and, as I look backward, I see the mark of college life impressed for better or for worse upon every one of my college class-mates. To some it was a helpful experience. To others it was ruin. In college, above everywhere else, there is vital need of the conscious presence of Christ as Savior, Counselor and Friend."

Robert Speer, in an article on "Temptations in College Life," says: "Many temptations do urge themselves with special ingenuity in college. It would be strange if intellectual temptations failed in this. The interrogations of larger knowledge, the collapse of prejudice, suspicion and assumption that had masqueraded as assumed truth, the spirit of skepticism, the agnosticism of many teachers which they do not attempt to conceal, and the religious indifference or ignorance of others who could not conceal it if they would, are but few of the many influences which suggest doubt as to religious truth or moral principle;" and Bushnell, in speaking of the same temptations which beset college students, says: "They wake up, by and by, startled by the discovery that they believe *nothing*. They can nowhere put down their foot and say, 'Here is truth.'"

Florence Nightingale was not far from right when she said, "Introduce a man to the three R's without teaching him the fear of God and you have introduced him to the fourth R of rascality." But let the young man who goes out from the college walls in all the strength of his young manhood, have, in addition to his college training, a thorough knowledge of God's Word and the fear of God in his heart, and "his strength is as the strength of ten, because his heart is pure." All permanent greatness must be founded upon Bible truths. Our young people upon whom the responsibility of government must soon rest should go forth strongly fortified to meet those great responsibilities. George Washington said, "It is impossible to govern the world without God." Thomas Jefferson, in whose

native State our Bible work is established, said, "I have always said, and always will say, that the studious perusal of the Sacred Volume will make better citizens, better husbands and better fathers;" and Lincoln said, "In regard to the Great Book, I can only say it is the best gift which God has given to man."

There are many new dangers for our nation to meet. Great possibilities and great powers mean also great dangers, and if it be true that in the near future it shall be said, "As goes America so goes the world," it behooves to see that this is a Bible nation and this people a God fearing people. *Christian* education will be needed to meet the dangers of the 20th century.

We may go back to the Pilgrim Fathers, who, when they placed their feet upon Plymouth Rock, placed also their faith and trust in the Bible, and up to the present time all of the great and good who have accomplished any lasting good for the nations or for mankind have been students of the Bible.

Some have wondered at the courage, faith and steadfastness through discouragements, misrepresentations and almost persecution of the pioneers who started out to take the Bible, and the Bible alone, as their creed, but those of us who had parents or grandparents among that number, and who remember how to them the Bible was the Book of all books—studied, referred to and discussed daily and at all hours of the day—do not wonder that they were strong in the faith and able to meet all opposition, for they were *Bible men* and *women*.

If there has been any relaxation of that Bible study—and it is but too apparent that there has been—it is time that it was taken up again and with renewed vigor. Every opportunity possible should be given to our young people to learn the truths of that Book.

If the women of this country, yes, if the women of our churches, could realize what the Bible has done for them, and resolve that no boy or girl is thoroughly equipped for strong, brave, true and pure manhood and womanhood without a knowledge of the Bible, and the training which that would give, what a great work could be accomplished before the close of the first decade of the new century.

It is not optional with us, it is imperative, and we of all people should be the ones to lead in this work. The door is

open to us, and oh! how watchful we should be, lest in these busiest days, that the world has ever known, we miss some of the opportunities given to us to work in His service. There are glorious opportunities which God expects us to understand and use to the best advantage of His cause and kingdom. No achievement of the past can justify any relaxation of earnest effort for the future.

Surely all will acknowledge that a great work has been done at Ann Arbor and at the University of Virginia. We do not now, nor in this world can we ever know, the amount of good accomplished. Only He who gave the command and who keeps the books can estimate the cost or the returns of work done for Him.

There has been a famine cry for bread going out from India to all the world and America has led the world in sending bread to starving thousands. Is there not a famine cry for the Bread of Life going out from some of the very centers of civilization?

To everybody comes at times the question, What am I, and whither am I going? and the Bible alone can answer that question. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life." We dare not withhold from our young people the *only answer* to those questions and the only weapon with which they can successfully combat the evils of this world and which will, after the stormy battle of life is over, be their guide to the haven of rest.

May the glorious Lord have a glorious people to follow Him in this glorious work, and may the time soon come when our young people shall not feel that their education is complete till they can say of the Bible:

"Thou truest friend man ever knew,
Thy constancy I've tried;
When all were false I found thee true,
My counsellor and guide.
The mines of earth no treasures give
That could this volume buy,
In teaching me the way to live,
It taught me how to die."

Medina, Ohio.

MRS. LATHROP COOLEY.

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